

## **Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum, Ph.D., M.D.**

### ***Director, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness HQDA, DCS G-3/5/7***

BG Rhonda Cornum is the Director of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness in the Army G-3/5/7. She was commissioned into the Army and began a research career in 1978 after receiving her Ph.D. in nutrition and biochemistry from Cornell. Assigned to the Letterman Army Institute of Research, she focused on wound healing metabolism and improving liquid blood preservation and transfusion therapy. From 1982-1986, she attended medical school at the Uniformed Services University, received her M.D., and completed a General Surgery Internship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In 1987, she transferred to the Army Aeromedical Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., first as Chief, Primary Care and Community Medicine, then Chief of Aviation Medicine. In 1989, research again became her primary duty as Chief, Crew Life Support Branch at the Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory, also at Fort Rucker. While there, her interests revolved around enhancing pilot performance and use of helmet mounted displays in advanced attack helicopters.



Research was interrupted by the Persian Gulf conflict. In August of 1990, BG Cornum was assigned as the flight surgeon to the 2/229 Attack Helicopter Battalion. During the last week of February 1991, while performing a search and rescue mission for a downed Air Force F-16 pilot, her Blackhawk helicopter was shot down. Five of the eight-person crew were killed. The three survivors, including BG Cornum, were captured by Iraqi forces. She was repatriated on March 6, 1991.

BG Cornum attended Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base from 1991 through 1992. She began Urologic Surgery training in 1993. In addition to academic and clinical responsibilities, she renewed her blood and metabolic research interests, including use of the absorbable fibrin bandage, and evaluating alternate strategies for treating prostate cancer. Following graduation in 1998, she was assigned as the assistant DCCS and staff urologist at Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Augusta, Ga. She is Board certified in Urology and a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons and Aerospace Medical Association. She took command of the 28th Combat Support Hospital at Fort Bragg, N.C., on July 25, 2000. In this position she deployed as the Medical Task Force Commander to Bosnia for SFOR 9, and deployed three subordinate units to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. After that command tour she attended the National War College and graduated in June 2003. BG Cornum then commanded Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany. During this time, Landstuhl cared for over 26,000 war heroes, including 5,540 battle injuries,

evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan. In June 2005, she became the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Surgeon, Fort McPherson, Ga., where her responsibilities included casualty care of the deployed force and providing medical expertise to the higher headquarters for all CONUS-based Army Forces. In her preceding assignment, BG Cornum served as the U.S. Army's Assistant Surgeon General for Force Projection with responsibilities including policy development, organization and overall management of the Army-wide health services system.

In addition to senior flight surgeon wings, BG Cornum wears the airborne, air assault, and the expert field medic badges. Decorations include the Legion of Merit (with two oak leaf clusters), Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (with four oak leaf clusters), Purple Heart, Air Medal, POW Medal and others. Dr. Cornum has written or co-authored one book, four book chapters, and numerous scientific articles. She sits on numerous committees and advisory boards, including the Secretary's POW Advisory Committee for the VA.